

POP (Probability of Precipitation)

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You may hear forecasters use the term POPs, but just what are these POPs they speak of? POP is an abbreviation for Probability Of Precipitation. OK, so what does Probability of Precipitation mean? It is essentially a statistical probability of getting a measurable amount of moisture in a given location.

OK, but what is considered a measurable amount of moisture? The National Weather Service considers anything equal to or greater than one one-hundredth (0.01) of an inch of precipitation the smallest measurable amount of precipitation.

So now that I know what it is how do I use that information? If you notice a POP of 50% over your area, then you can expect a 50% chance of receiving a measurable amount of precipitation during that given time period. You must keep in mind that like many things weather has a dimension of time to it, or a time element of you wish.

So how do I know how much rain to expect if the POP is 75%? Let me try to explain what POP does not mean. POP does not relate to an amount of precipitation, other than the aforementioned 0.01 inches. There is no association that can be drawn between the amount of precipitation expected and the likelihood of precipitation occurring.

Ok, so now that I understand what POP is and what it is not is there anything else I should know about POP? Consider this, If the POP for a given location at a particular time is 60% that also means there is a 40% chance that there will not be a measurable amount of rain. Keep that in mind when you are planning your next outdoor event.

POP Value	Qualifying Term	Equivalent Areal Term
15% to 24%	Slight Chance	Isolated
25% to 54%	Chance	Scattered
55% to 74%	Likely	Numerous
75% to 100%	None used(Definate)	Widespread